

the floor or by making up one's body in the form of that deity. This ritual song is something that springs from the mind of the singer.

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## Rediscovered Kumandy Shamanic Texts in Vilmos Diószegi's Manuscript Legacy

DÁVID SOMFAI KARA

BUDAPEST, HUNGARY

*This article is based on the materials collected by the ethnologists Vilmos Diószegi (of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences) and Feofan A. Satlaev (of the Soviet Academy of Sciences) from the Siberian Turkic Kumandy on a joint field trip in August, 1964. Diószegi was the first Hungarian ethnologist to have undertaken fieldwork in Siberia during Soviet times. Diószegi had previously conducted fieldwork in Siberia among Western Buryat, Khakas, Tuva and Tofa in 1957–8, before his final fieldwork in the Altay Republic among the Altay-kizhi and Telengit and Kumandy in the Altaiskii kraï. Satlaev, himself a Kumandy, took Diószegi to his home area along the Biia river, where they collected texts from three shamans. During the two-week field trip they collected folklore texts mainly on shamanism and native religion. Later Satlaev typed up the Kumandy texts and sent them to Diószegi. Diószegi died in 1972 and the material remained unpublished, even though there is valuable information on Kumandy shamanic traditions, on how the shaman's soul traveled to the Lower World to find ürkken jula (runaway soul), to be found among these items. Data are also provided about various spirits, such as šalığ (protector), elči (messenger), ee /ē/ (master spirit), aza (demon), and as well as tayılga (sacrifice) and the kočo ritual. The present article is a short introduction to this valuable material, which is now kept in the archives of the Institute of Ethnology, The Research Center for the Humanities (Hungarian Academy of Sciences).*

Vilmos Diószegi (1923–72), the renowned Hungarian researcher of Siberian shamanic traditions, left a prolific manuscript legacy at his untimely death. Some parts of it are now kept in the Institute of Ethnology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Diószegi's manuscripts, typescripts, and notes are stored in paper folders in the archives of the institute. The Hungarian ethnologist and linguist Éva Schmidt (1948–2002) compiled a tentative

catalogue in Hungarian that was never published.<sup>1</sup> The present article is the third part of a series of preliminary reports on Diószegi's manuscript legacy.<sup>2</sup> It concerns the materials he collected during his last field trip among the Kumandy along the Biia (Biy in Kumandy) river in 1964. I have chosen some texts on beliefs concerning how the shaman's soul travels to the Lower World and catches a runaway soul (*ürkken jula*). The texts are published here with transcriptions from the original Kumandy and English translation done by the author. Diószegi never published his Kumandy materials even though later Feofan A. Satlaev sent him the typewritten transcriptions of these texts. Diószegi only published two texts on *čacilgi* (libation) he collected from an Altay-kizhi (I. M. Saim, 56 years old) and a Tuba-kizhi informant (N. P. Chernoeva, 43 years old) in Gorno-Altai'sk after his fieldwork among the Kumandy (Diószegi 1970). Diószegi wanted to stay longer, but he became very ill during his fieldwork among the Telengit in the Kosh-Agach *rayon* (district) (September 26–30), so he had to return to Hungary in October. He never returned to Siberia again and died in 1972 at the age of forty-nine.

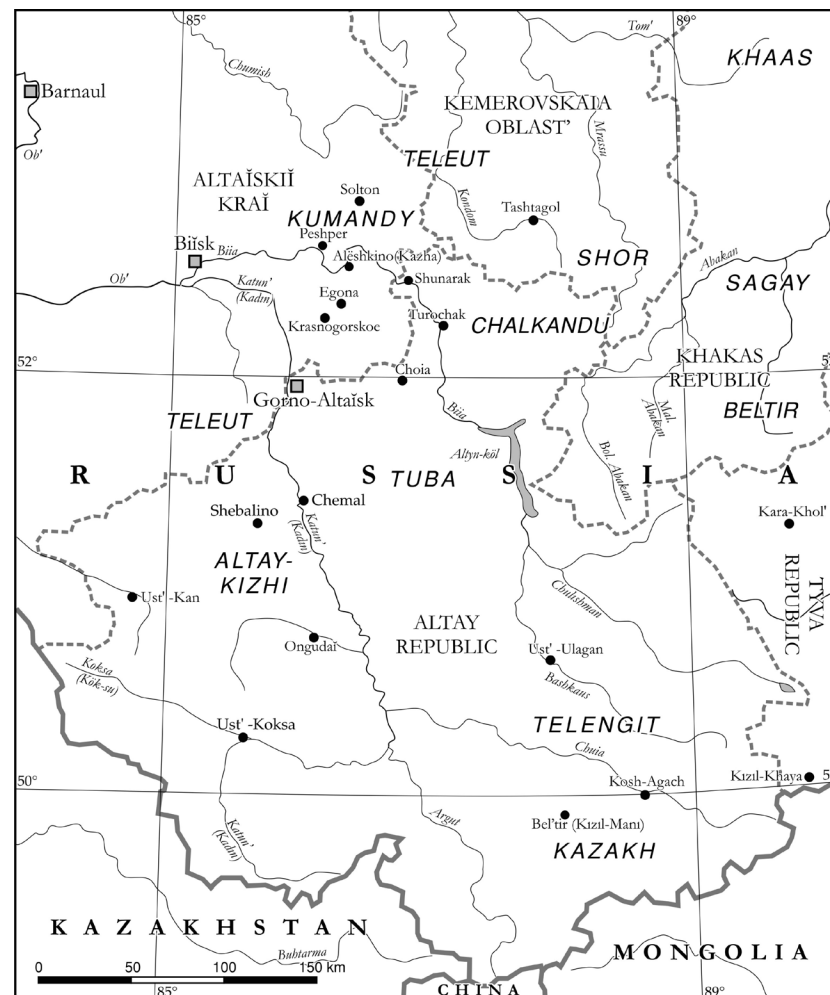
### *On the Kumandy*

The Kumandy is a small ethnic group living by the Biia river north of the Altay Mountains. In 2010 they numbered 3,000 according to the official census of the Russian Federation. Half of them (1,500) lived in Altaiskii *krai* (Altay Territory of the Russian Federation), mostly in the Krasnogorskoe and Solton *rayons* (districts), and the rest, 1,000 people in Turochak *rayon* of the Altay Republic of the Russian Federation.<sup>3</sup> There are also a small num-

<sup>1</sup> When I started to work at the institute in 2003, my task was to find out exactly what kind of materials were kept in the archives that were related to shamanic traditions and Diószegi's field trips to Siberia. I found fourteen folders with manuscripts related to this topic. Some of the materials were collected during Diószegi's field trips to Siberia between 1957 and 1964. I also found many valuable unpublished materials, and I started to prepare them for publication. I also compared the manuscripts with data published earlier on his field trips.

<sup>2</sup> The first and second parts were Diószegi's Bulagat-Buryat (1957) and Tozhu-Tuva (1958) materials, see Somfai Kara (2008; 2012).

<sup>3</sup> In 2002 I visited one of the last genuine Kumandy villages in Turochak *rayon* of the Altay Republic.



Map of the Altay region. Drawn by Béla Nagy, 2018.

ber of Kumandy in Kemerovskaia *oblast'* (around 300). Many Kumandy were assimilated to the Russians and the Altay-kizhi and they have lost their language and ethnic identity, so their actual number should be over 10,000. Most of the Kumandy now live in the town of Biisk, and very few Kumandy villages survived the village destruction period in the 1970s ordered by Soviet statesman, Nikita S. Khrushchëv. The Kumandy were incorporated into

the Turkic-speaking artificial ethnic group “Altaitsy,” which consisted of the closely related Altay-kizhi and Telengit (prior to 1948 known as Oyrot). During Soviet times some other small Turkic groups north of the Altay Mountains (Tuba, Chalkandu/Shalkandu or Kuu-kizhi and Kumandy) were also included to the “Altaitsy” as well the Teleut (Telenget) of Kemerovskaia *oblast’*. Actually these groups speak various dialects that are distinct from the Altay-kizhi and Telengit.<sup>4</sup> They comprise a dialectal chain between Altai-kizhi, Shor and Khakas dialects.

*Fieldwork Done by Vilmos Diószegi along the Biia River  
in the Altaiskii Krai and the Altay Republic, between August 23  
and September 23, 1964*

Diószegi traveled to Gorno-Altaiisk on August 21 from Novosibirsk via Biisk (Altaiskii krai). He was met by the colleagues of the Gorno-Altai Research Institute of History, Language and Literature. He presented the local scholars a copy of Andrei V. Anokhin’s manuscript<sup>5</sup> on Altay Turkic shamanic traditions, so local scholars were very helpful during his fieldwork.<sup>6</sup> They assigned Satlaev (1931–95),<sup>7</sup> a native Kumandy, to Diószegi, a young post-graduate student (Russian *aspirant*) of the famous Russian ethnographer Leonid P. Potapov (1905–2000). Unfortunately, Diószegi’s diary from his 1964 fieldwork was lost<sup>8</sup> so we only have information about his fieldwork from his letters he wrote to his wife, Judit Morvay (1923–2002).

<sup>4</sup> Baskakov (1972) also considered Kumandy a dialect of the so-called Altay or Oyrot languages.

<sup>5</sup> Andrei V. Anokhin (1869–1931) was a Russian ethnographer who conducted fieldwork among the Altay-kizhi, Telengit, Teleut (Telenget) and Shor. He studied folklore and shamanic traditions (Anokhin 1924).

<sup>6</sup> Sharing Anokhin’s materials with local colleagues was considered illegal by the Soviet Academy of Sciences. This was the reason Diószegi was not allowed to do further research in Siberia.

<sup>7</sup> Satlaev is also the author of a book on the Kumandy people (Satlaev 1974).

<sup>8</sup> According to a letter to his wife, Judit Morvay, he left this part of his diary in Kyzyl-Maany (today Bel’tir in the Kosh-Agach *rayon*) during his fieldwork among the Telengit.

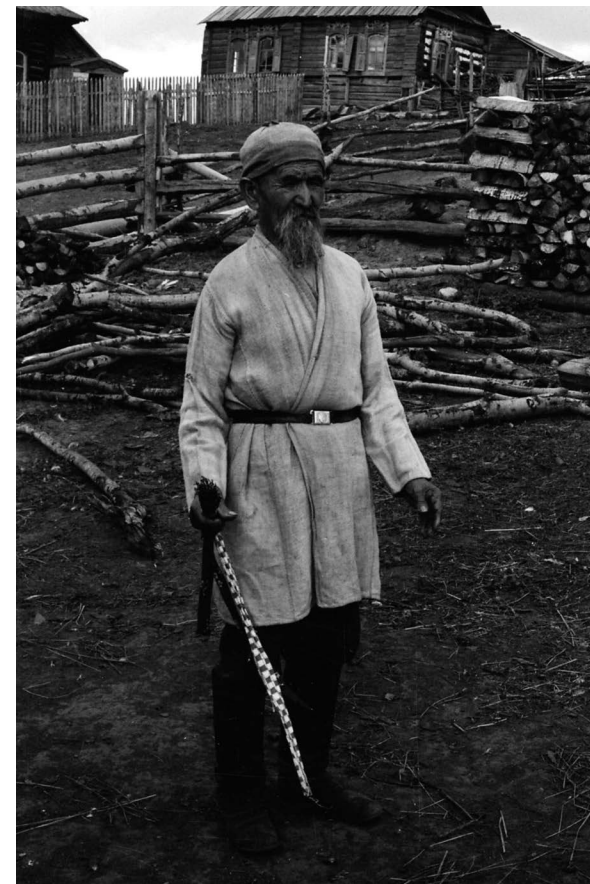


Fig. 1. Anton (Sanpar P.) Lemzhin, a Kumandy shaman from the village of Peshper (Krasnogorskoe *rayon*, Altaiskii *krai*). He wears a shamanic attire (headgear, cloak) and holds a checkered stick in his hand that substitutes for the drumstick. Photo: Vilmos Diószegi, 1964. Courtesy of the Museum of Ethnography, Budapest.

Two days after Diószegi arrived (August 23) in Gorno-Altaiisk, Satlaev took him to his homeland on the Biia river and they started to visit some small Kumandy villages.<sup>9</sup> Diószegi recorded materials about their sacrifices (*tayılga*) and a special erotic ritual (*kočo*) that was performed during these

<sup>9</sup> Satlaev was born in Egona, 6 km north of the settlement of Krasnogorskoe in the Altaiskii *krai*.

sacrifices. Having conducted two weeks of fieldwork he had to return to Gorno-Altaišk on September 5 in a hurry because his tape-recorder had broken down. So he could write to his wife only on the following day.

Gorno-Altaišk, September 6, 1964

Suddenly I had to return to Gorno-Altaišk, so I have some time to write to you. Two weeks have passed since August 23, when I started to visit Kumandy villages with success. In Leningrad I thought that I would not be able to collect good material like Anokhin's. I was wrong. The Kumandy people were considered quite Russified by colleagues in Leningrad. This would be quite logical since the Fortress of Biisk was founded in 1718, and the Kumandy people—at least some of them—started to pay taxes to two states, to Dzungaria and Russia, from 1745. The same year the first Russian village among the Kumandy was mentioned: Novikovo. We know about twenty-one Russian villages among the Kumandy and more than a hundred and thirty-five years ago (1828) the first Orthodox mission of the Altay was also founded there. Its leader wrote the following in 1860: "The ones that were baptized have settled down and live in peasant communities just like the Russians." In spite of all that two Kumandy will earn great fame: Syrga P. Pelekova, a female shaman from Alëshkino (Kazha) village and Anton (Sanpar P.) Lemzhin (Fig. 1) a male shaman from Peshper. They will be immortalized in my future book on Kumandy shamanic beliefs.

I have started to tell things *in medias res*. I am sorry. Fieldwork is fine, there is plenty of material. My informants include ordinary people as well as participants of the *taylga* animal sacrifice and acting ritual, named *kočo*. The whole thing is coming to light—the belief system of the Kumandy. Kumandy people are divided into clans (so far I have recorded nine genuine Kumandy clans and six Tuba and Shalkandu ones as well as Shor clans among the Kumandy. Clans make up phratries that do not marry among each other. One of the phratries (*Üre Kumandy*) consists of the *Tastar*, *Šakšilig* and *Čootu* clans. Each clan has its own protector spirit (Bay-ana), and the soul of the sacrificed animal flies to that spirit. I have recorded not only the names of these clan spirits but also their dwelling places. On the way to the main spirit Bay Ülgen the shaman meets the clan protecting spirits. Lemzhin even draw me a map of the shaman's road. I have collected the names of the deceased shamans, about forty of them. It is not so few if we compare it with the total number of the Kumandy (around 6000). There should be at least sixty shamans, which means around one shaman for every hundred persons.



Fig. 2. Feofan A. Satlaev records the speech of an old Kumandy man while he prepares a stand for a horse sacrifice in a birch wood near the village of Alëshkino (Kazha), Krasnogorskoe rayon, Altaiskii kraï. Photo: Vilmos Diószegi, 1964. Courtesy of the Museum of Ethnography, Budapest.



Fig. 3. Vilmos Diószegi records the speech of an old Kumandy man while he prepares a stand for a horse sacrifice in a birch wood near the village of Alëshkino (Kazha), Krasnogorskoe rayon, Altaiskii kraï. Photo: Feofan A. Satlaev, 1964. Courtesy of the Museum of Ethnography, Budapest.

I have recorded the names of the shamans' protecting spirits (*elčiler*<sup>10</sup>) and their shapes and activities. I have data about local or owner spirits (*eeler*), e.g. mountain spirits (*tag eezi*), the water spirit (*sug eezi*), the house spirit (*ög eezi*). Some of them are numerous, e.g. mountain spirits (I am trying to make a list of them). I have data about the evil spirits (*aza*), about fifteen different types. I not only record their names, but try to get more information about them, e.g. the illnesses they cause and how to cure them. Curing is done by the shamans and every illness has its own ritual, invoking song and sacrifices. One spirit needs meat (sheep of various colors), some spirits demand bloodless sacrifice. I have taken pictures of cups used during these animal sacrifices. Only the spraying spoon of liquid sacrifice is missing. I asked them to perform three artificial sacrifices (*tayılga*) without killing the animals. We go out to a small birch wood and a skilled old man builds the site of the *tayılga* in a couple of hours. He builds a small hut for the shaman and the person who performs the sacrifice raises a pole for the sacrificed animal. There are two poles for skinning the dead animal. There is a living tree where they put the pole for the skin with nine birch branches. I have taken many pictures (Figs. 2, 3). Last time the old man even created an artificial animal from grass. I have recorded quite a few *kočo* songs (erotic ritual) performed during the *tayılga*. The *tamır-tomır* songs are performed by the wives of the clan members who cannot take part in the sacrifice because they come from other clans (exogamy). I have not forgotten about the spirit idols. Materials from the museum show very few examples which match my fieldwork experience. I have photographed some of them at the corners of their houses. I have received one of them as a present and it is in my suitcase, it is called *šalgı*.

Later he returned to the Kumandy for another two-week field trip to the Biia river but we have no detailed information on this. In another letter, addressed to his wife, he only wrote the following:

Gorno-Altaišk, September 24, 1964

[. . .] I have returned from fieldwork with unexpected results. I suppose that the names of Peshkova, Lemzhin and Shatabalov will be renowned in scholarship. They are all former shamans of the Kumandy. I have agreed with them that in the winter they will visit me in Gorno-Altaišk, and then I will record all their mysteries. If I succeed, then it [i.e. my collection] will be larger than Anokhin's material (you probably know this will be a great achievement) . . . Out of the twenty Kumandy

<sup>10</sup> *Elčiler* is the plural form of the Altay Turkic *elči* (protecting spirit).

clans only half of them are genuine Kumandy, the rest are Shalkandu, Tuba or Shor (e.g. Cheley and Chebder) . . . There is a spirit, called *kurtıyak* (old woman) painted on canvas. I have found it and I will take a picture of it when I return from the Telengit.<sup>11</sup> The shaman paints it on a canvas and when it is ready they put a cup of porridge in front of it during the night. Otherwise they sacrifice sheep for her (black in one year and white the following year) and they take the meat to the river and let it flow by the water. If one branch of the clan dies out their *kurtıyak* idol is put on a small boat and relatives let it float down the river. Once this *kurtıyak* was a living woman but she was put in a barrel and thrown in the river. But it has returned as a spirit. I have found *kurtıyak* among the Shabat clan but it was brought to them by one of the wives, who inherited it from her mother, who as [she was] from the Cheley clan [was] probably of Shor origin. So *kurtıyak* might be of Shor origin too, that is why the Chebder clan also has this idol.

### On the Texts

Diószegi visited a few villages in Krasnogorskoe *rayon* (in the Altaıškiı *krai*), during his two-week field trip among the Kumandy people, but managed to collect folklore texts only in the villages of Alëshkino (Kazha) and Peshper (these villages were later destroyed). These texts were collected from three informants (shamans) according to the material written down by Satlaev. Interestingly, we do not find any materials from the other two shamans, Lemzhin and Shatabalov, he mentions in his letters: Syrga P. Pelekova (Fig. 4), aged 75, female, Alëshkino (Kazha); Anisia Chenchikeeva, aged 85, female, Alëshkino (Kazha); and Anton Uruzakov, aged 64, male (Egona).

The texts consist of fourteen paragraphs numbered by Satlaev, and they contain spirit invocation songs, a song dealing with chasing away a dead person's soul (*süri* or *üzüit*), another song on how to catch the runaway soul (*jula*) of a sick person, and, finally, an extract from a sacrificial song (*tamır-tomır*).

<sup>11</sup> Diószegi after his fieldwork among the Kumandy visited the Telengit, who live beside the Mongolian border in the Kosh-Agash and Ulagan *rayons*. He went to Kosh-Agash on September 26, but soon got sick and had to spend nine days in hospital between October 1 and 9. He returned to Gorno-Altaišk on October 15, but could not continue his fieldwork among the Kumandy.



Fig. 4. Syrğa P. Pelekova, an old female shaman (*kam*) from the village of Alëshkino (Kazha), Krasnogorskoe rayon, Altaiskii kraj. Photo: Vilmos Diószegi, 1964. Courtesy of the Museum of Ethnography, Budapest.

Syrğa P. Pelekova, a female shaman, sang the following:

- (1) a song to call her helping spirits (*elči*). This is the longest, most complete text, 100 lines;
- (2) a song about searching after a runaway soul (*ürkken jula*), but interrupted because the female shaman (*kam*) was warned by her helping spirits not to call them without a reason (46 lines);

- (3) a short extract from the song to call the helping spirits again (15 lines).

Anton Uruzakov, a male shaman, sang the following songs:

- (4) an extract from a song of sacrifice to the spirit (*šalig*) of hunters and the guarding spirit of the house (*ügding eezi*) (15 lines);
- (5) a short extract from a wedding song (*tamır-tomır*) (13 lines).

Anisia Chenchikeeva, a female shaman, sang the greatest part of the material:

- (6) an extract from a shaman's spirit-invoking song (*kamnaar*) (32 lines);
- (7) an extract from a song to chase away the soul (*süri*) from the house seven/nine days after a person died (68 lines).

(8–13) A song about the shaman's travel into the Lower World of Erlik in order to bring back a runaway free-soul (*kut*), called *ürkken jula* by the shamans. She meets Erlik's seven daughters, and performs for them an aspersion sacrifice. They let her in and she talks with Erlik. At the end she offers a libation (*ariki*) to Kakır-ata, Erlik's relative, to help her get back the lost spirit.

(14) Shaman's travel to Erlik. It starts with calling the helping spirits (*elči*). Then she describes Erlik's seven daughters (*jeti kısı*), who guard Erlik at three gates of the Lower World that lead to Erlik. At each gate she is stopped and questioned. She gets through all the three doors by inviting them for a drink. She meets Erlik and asks for the lost spirit.

First let me present the first song from Syrğa P. Pelekova (aged 75).

Calling the helping spirits (*elči*) (1–100 lines):

- 1 *ak ayasta olottig*
- 2 *ak bulutta oynnig*
- 3 *tag bažına olottig*
- 4 *tag bažına oynnig*
- 5 *kara tašta olottig*
- 6 *kan mus tagning kicırgan*
- 7 *sanap bolbos mung čerig*
- 8 *kıdır bolbos mung čerig*
- 9 *sanap bolbos mung čerig*
- 10 *jalang bargan kamčihg*

- 11 *jažın bıla jaltıt kör*
- 12 *ak ayasta kıygılı*
- 13 *kan mus tagning suragčılar*
- 14 *aarlıg jobol tilegči*
- 15 *açıl baži suragči*
- 16 *kaan jargızı suragčılar*
- 17 *jargı baži endibeen*
- 18 *jezim kaanım algannarım*
- 19 *jes kılıçım taya-körler*
- 20 *bos kılıçing jölön-körler*
- 21 *atkı baži tengnep tutta*
- 22 *jes kakpangıng jaltıngnažıp*
- 23 *jezil jebe salınıžıp*
- 24 *jezim kaanım olor edi*
- 25 *jeti tööy sarı kısı*
- 26 *edektering bizingnežıp*
- 27 *kirbiktering tag jılbižıp*
- 28 *kindikteri jer jılbižıp*
- 29 *albın-jelbin keptigler*
- 30 *altı örküştig aga tamga*
- 31 *tebilişken olor edi*
- 32 *togus köstü tolo marska<sup>12</sup>*
- 33 *togılışkan olor edi*
- 34 *üç üyelüü altın kamçı ñaginga*
- 35 *altı köstig ak ñagılga*
- 36 *tebilişken olor edi*
- 37 *keen soyon uluzı*
- 38 *keen soyon uluzı*
- 39 *kün altınça jör*
- 40 *kün altınça jažarda*
- 41 *kümüš kuyak salınıžıp*
- 42 *ay altınça jažarda*
- 43 *altın kuyak salıžıp*
- 44 *kızıl jegrin attıglar*
- 45 *kızıl tokım keçiglig*

<sup>12</sup> *Bars* or *mars* is the Turkic and Mongolic name for leopard or tiger that were still common in the region at the beginning of the twentieth century.

- 46 *Ičen kaandang aylankabıs*
- 47 *elči bergen mung ulus*
- 48 *Keen Kemčik ulusı*
- 49 *tolgop alar sinnıglar*
- 50 *Ülgen sıstıg Kakır adam jažarda*
- 51 *kuskun tüşken kuba šöl*
- 52 *tegri tözi sarı taganak*
- 53 *Elči kaandang aylangan*
- 54 *sangıskan tüşken sarı šöl*
- 55 *keen taa kemčik ulusı*
- 56 *keen taa soyon ulusı*
- 57 *kıygaš teygış böriüktüg*
- 58 *ala mončak tonnuglar*
- 59 *ay altınça jožordo*
- 60 *altın kuyak kiyin kebister*
- 61 *kıl tabaktıg olor edi*
- 62 *Erlik adam jožordo*
- 63 *aarlık jobol sura dedi*
- 64 *kan mus tagning suragčıları*
- 65 *Büttiüg kaan kan šerig*
- 66 *Açıl baži tilegči*
- 67 *jargı baži endibeen*
- 68 *jalang bargan kamčılıg*
- 69 *ak ayasta olottıg*
- 70 *ak bulutta oynıng*
- 71 *tag bažında olottıg*
- 72 *korım tašta kuyaktıg*
- 73 *Ičen kaandang aylangan*
- 74 *Elče bergen olor ediler*
- 75 *kam mus tagını kıcırgan*
- 76 *Kün allında šöller ediler*
- 77 *tebilişken körgey ediler*
- 78 *Er allına olor ediler*
- 79 *Bači bolgon olor ediler*
- 80 *Er boyınang olor ediler*
- 81 *jölök bolgon olor ediler*
- 82 *tirig jılan tiskinnig*
- 83 *kara jılan kamčılıg*
- 84 *til tartınbas kerey kiži*

85 *but tartınbas soyon kiši*  
 86 *kašık tutpas olor ediler*  
 87 *biček kiži olor ediler*  
 88 *ešilbelü kök kubakta*  
 89 *jorıktu kaannar ediler*  
 90 *Er boyınang jölök bolgon ediler*  
 91 *al taygamı ašarda*  
 92 *jölök bolgon olor ediler*  
 93 *agar sugrı kečerde*  
 94 *kečig baštaan olor ediler*  
 95 *at aylanbas olor ediler*  
 96 *Šaar tüpte jargılıg*  
 97 *Ńanda kaanda jargılıg*  
 98 *Köküš kaanda šiyinnig*  
 99 *Köniürt kaanda jargılıg*  
 100 *jargı baži endibeenner*

1 They sit in white open sky,  
 2 They play with white clouds,  
 3 They sit on the top of the mountain,  
 4 They play on the top of the mountain,  
 5 They sit on a black rock.  
 6 They call the spirits of the Great Ice Mountain,  
 7 Uncountable big troops,  
 8 Impossible to call those big troops,  
 9 Uncountable big troops,  
 10 They ride horses with whips,  
 11 Try to destroy them with lightning,  
 12 They shout at clear skies,  
 13 They call the spirits of the Great Ice Mountain,  
 14 Hard sufferings they search for,  
 15 The main favor they ask for.  
 16 They wait for the order of the Khan.  
 17 They didn't contravene the main law.  
 18 They took my Bronze Khan,  
 19 Bronze whip, help me!  
 20 Bronze swords assist me!  
 21 Hold straight the head of the arrow,  
 22 Your bronze cover is bright,

23 Bronze arrows they were,  
 24 He was my Bronze Khan.  
 25 Seven identical blonde girl,  
 26 Their skirts fly around,  
 27 Their eye-lashes touch the mountains,  
 28 Their navels touch the ground,  
 29 They have frightening faces,  
 30 These mighty monsters with six humps,  
 31 They are kicking each other,  
 32 With the nine-eyed big leopard,  
 33 They were fighting there,  
 34 On the edge of the nine-jointed whip,  
 35 And six-eyed white lightning,  
 36 They kick each other there,  
 37 The big nation of the Soyon,  
 38 The big nation of the Soyon,<sup>13</sup>  
 39 Walk beneath the Sun,  
 40 If they live beneath the Sun,  
 41 They will wear silver armor,  
 42 If they live beneath the Moon,  
 43 They will wear golden armor.  
 44 They have reddish horses,  
 45 Their harness is also red,  
 46 We have returned from Ichen Khan,<sup>14</sup>  
 47 A thousand troops were sent as envoys,  
 48 The big nation of the Khemchik river,<sup>15</sup>  
 49 They can change their forms,  
 50 Where Ülgen's brother Father Kakır lives  
 51 In the pale desert, where the magpie ends its journey.  
 52 At the end of the sky there is a yellow stick,  
 53 They returned from Elči Khan,  
 54 From the yellow desert, where the magpie ends its journey.  
 55 The big nation of the Khemchik river,

<sup>13</sup> Soyon is one of the main clans of the Tuva people and sometimes their exonym by neighboring ethnic groups (e.g. Mongol *Soyad*).

<sup>14</sup> I have no information about this spirit.

<sup>15</sup> Khemchik means "Smaller Khem," that is, "Smaller Enisei" and it is a tributary river of Enisei in Tuva.



56 The big nation of the Soyon,  
 57 They have hats that are not straight,  
 58 They have gowns with motley pearls,  
 59 When they lie beneath the Moon,  
 60 They wear golden armor,  
 61 Their plates were narrow like hair,  
 62 When they met Father Erlik,  
 63 He asked them about the sufferings,  
 64 They are calling the spirits of the Geart Ice Mountain,  
 65 The bloody troops of Büttüg Khan,  
 66 They ask for a big favor,  
 67 Do not contravene the main law.  
 68 They ride horses with whips,  
 69 They sit there in clean skies,  
 70 They play on white clouds,  
 71 They sit on the mountains,  
 72 Their armor is made of rocks,  
 73 They returned from Ichen Khan,  
 74 They arrived as couriers,  
 75 They called them from the Ice Mountain,  
 76 There were deserts under the sun,  
 77 They were dancing there,  
 78 They were in front of Er[lik],<sup>16</sup>  
 79 They were shepherds,  
 80 They came from Er[lik] himself,  
 81 They were his supporters,  
 82 Their reins were like snakes,  
 83 Their whips were black snakes,  
 84 They are like a Kazak<sup>17</sup> who always speaks,  
 85 They are like a Tuva who never sits down,  
 86 They do not hold spoons in their hand,  
 87 They were using knives,  
 88 In the widespread grey sand,  
 89 They were khans walking around,  
 90 They were the supporters of Erlik himself,

<sup>16</sup> In the text a short form Er of the name Erlik is used.

<sup>17</sup> Kerey is the main clan of the Kazaks who live in the Altay Mountains.

91 When they crossed the big mountain,  
 92 They were his companions,  
 93 When he crossed a river,  
 94 They led him through the ford,  
 95 They did not turn their horses,  
 96 They held court at Shaar-tüp,  
 97 They held court at Nyanda Khan,  
 98 They were chosen by Köküsh Khan,  
 99 They held court at Könürt Khan,  
 100 They did not violate the main law.

### *Various Types of Spirits: Kaan, Kakır Ata, Šalg and Kurtıyak*

In the spirit-invoking song the shaman mentions various types of spirits that help during her spiritual activity. She generally calls these spirits *elči*, which would mean “courier” or “ambassador” in Turkic languages.<sup>18</sup> These spirits can be the owner spirits of nature: Kumandy *ee /ē/* (owner), e.g. Ichen Khan, so here they are called *khaan*.<sup>19</sup> One of these mediator spirits is Kakır Ata or Kagır Kan (Verbitskii 1884, 112), who is Erlik’s relative and mediates not only for the shamans but also between Erlik and Ülgen, the leading spirits of the Lower and Upper Worlds (Altay-kizhi *astu oroön* and *üstüüi oroön*).

In his letters to his wife Diószegi mentions two types of idols made for *šalg* and *kurtıyak*. Actually these are just honorary names for various spirits and not their specific names. The word *kurtıyak* simply means “an old woman” but it can be used as a honorary name for women and their spirits, just as among other Siberian peoples (e.g. Buryat *töödei* and Yakut *emeexsin*). Usually these women die in a tragic way and for that reason they return as spirits. Diószegi says that in this particular case the woman was killed by throwing her into the river in a barrel and she was probably related to the Shor, another Turkic group living in the neighboring Kemerovskaia *oblast*.<sup>20</sup>

The word *šalg* is also attested among other ethnic groups and their languages. We find the word *čalg* in Mongolian (Lessing 1973, 163) carrying

<sup>18</sup> In the Yugur language *elči* is an honorary title for shamans and other religious specialists. However, Potapov (1991, 161) mentions the form *enči* (heir).

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Buryat *xan*, plural *xad*.

<sup>20</sup> In 2010 the Kemerovskaia *oblast* had a Shor population of 11,000, mainly in the Tashtagolskii *rayon* (Mountain Shoria) as well as in neighboring Khakasia (about 1,000).

the meaning “fetish; idol.” In the Altay-kizhi and Telengit dialects the word is pronounced *čaluu* which indicates that it is a Turkic element in Mongolian, and the Old Turkic form was *\*čalg*. In their Oyrot-Russian dictionary Baskakov and Toshchakova (1947, 176) give three meanings of this word: “(1) idol of a spirit, or idol of a deceased shaman; (2) handle of a shamanic drum (to which the idol is attached); (3) shaman’s drum.” Thus, this word is a term for sacred objects just like the Mongol word *sakıyulsun* or *sakıyusun* (guardian, defender, protector) that can be used in similar senses: “guardian spirit or deity, angel; amulet, charm” (Lessing 1973, 662, 163).

Let me also present some material collected from Anisia Chenchikeeva (aged 85). The shaman’s soul (*kut*) travels to the Lower World to find the runaway soul (*ürkken jula*) of a sick person. The shaman talks to Erlik Khan’s daughters to get permission to enter, but they refuse to give it. The shaman would like to return the runaway soul (*kut*) of the patient, called *ürkken jula* “frightened spirit” in the text. First, she does not get the permission:

1 *aarlıg jobol surayın dep keldim*  
 2 *açar baži tileyin*  
 3 *kaan jargızı surayın*  
 4 *ürkken jula surap keldim*  
 5 *altın čačing tengnep tudyın*  
 6 *kümüš čačing tengnep beriyn*  
 7 *božot!*

1 I have come to ask about the heavy suffering,  
 2 I am asking a great favor,  
 3 I want to know the command of the khans,  
 4 I am looking for the runaway soul,  
 5 Let me comb your golden hair,  
 6 Let me comb your silver hair,  
 7 Let me in!

The shaman asks for permission again:

8 *kerek kelding? surap jalar*  
 9 *aarlıg-jobol bažın surayn*  
 10 *kaan jargızın surayn*  
 11 *ačıl bažın tileyin*  
 12 *ürkken jula surap kelgem*

13 *kiži agrıp kulun edi üzüldi*  
 14 *baltır edi tügöndi*  
 15 *toglak baži toglan jıt*  
 16 *oyto jerge kelzin dep kelgem*

8 “Why did you come?” they [i.e. the daughters of Erlik] ask,  
 9 I want to know the reason for suffering,  
 10 I want to know the command of the khans,  
 11 I am asking a great favor,  
 12 I am looking for the runaway soul,  
 13 A man is sick, his young flesh is torn,  
 14 His calves are decaying,  
 15 His round head is spinning,  
 16 Let the (soul) come back to the Earth.

Finally, they let the shaman in. The shaman performs a libation or offering (*arıkı*) to Erlik.

17 *Erlik adam kan sakči*  
 18 *altın čačing tengnep beriyn*  
 19 *ürkken jula oyto ñanzın*  
 20 *dep surap kelgem*

17 Father Erlik, king of the guards,  
 18 Let me comb your golden hair,  
 19 Let the frightened soul return,  
 20 I have come to ask that.

The sacrifice is repeated three times and the shaman asks Erlik to drink from the offering.

Erlik asks:

21 *kayzı kaandang aylandıng?*

21 “From which country (*kbaan*) have you come?”

The shaman pretends to be afraid and answers:

- 22 *Orčin-jabı aba jıštang aylangam*  
 23 *Alakanči Ak-jaandang aylandım*  
 24 *Barčin kaandang aylanbadım*  
 25 *Kaan Altaydang aylanbadım*

- 22 I have come from the great forest Orchin-jabı,  
 23 I have come from Alakançı Ak-jaan,  
 24 I have come from Barčin Khan,  
 25 I have come from Kaan Altay.<sup>21</sup>

Erlik asks:

- 26 *Altaydang aylandingba?*

- 26 “Have you come from the Altay?”

The shaman answers:

- 27 *Kaan Altay aylanbadım*  
 28 *Orčin-jabı jıštang aylandım*

- 27 I have come from Kaan Altay,  
 28 From the great forest of Orčin-jabı.

Erlik asks again:

- 29 *Ene-Mončiy aylanding-ba?*  
 30 *Kaan Altaydang aylanding-ba?*

- 29 Have you come from Ene-Mončiy?  
 30 Have you came from Kaan Altay?

The shaman answers:

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<sup>21</sup> Kan Altay is the main protector spirit of the Altay Mountains.

- 31 *Barčin kaandang aylandım*  
 32 *Alakanči Ak jaandang aylandım*  
 33 *Orčin jabı aba jıštang aylandı*  
 34 *Jarlıg eezi Ene biydeng aylangam*  
 35 *Aygır jallıg Ana biydeng aylandım*

- 31 I have come from Barčin Kaan,  
 32 I have come from Alakançı Ak jaan.  
 33 I have come from the great forest, Orčin-jabı,  
 34 I have come from the commander, Ene Biy  
 35 Who has a stallion mane, Ana Biy.

The shaman performs a libation (*arıkı*) to Kakır Ata, who is Ülgen's relative, and says the following seven times if the sick person is female, and nine times if the sick person is male:<sup>22</sup>

- 36 *togus ayak, teng ayak*  
 37 *er boyım, tolyın*  
 38 *ürkken julam, tolyın*  
 39 *Orčin jabı saar aylandır*  
 40 *Alakanči jıš saar bur*  
 41 *kižining kudın*  
 42 *Alakanči Ak jaan jaar aylandır*  
 43 *jargı bila božıt*

- 36 Nine cups are similar cups,  
 37 “I am brave,” they should be full!  
 38 Oh, my runaway soul, they should be full,  
 39 Send it back to Orčin-jabı,  
 40 Turn it towards Alakanči-jıš,  
 41 The soul of a human being,  
 42 Turn it towards Alakançı Ak-jaan!  
 43 Make him free with an order!

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<sup>22</sup> The numbers are related to the nine sons and the seven daughters of Erlik Khan (Potapov 1991, 245–6).

The human soul (*kut*) can hide if it is frightened. The shaman starts to search for it by singing:

44 *jazı jerge jastıktı*  
 45 *tört tolıkka kısıtlar*  
 46 *kuş kanattang ter albas*  
 47 *jorga ayaandang toş albas*  
 48 *ak ayaska şıdırler*  
 49 *ak sarayning*  
 50 *er mangdayga tegri şalsa*  
 51 *ong ñanına burgalarbıs*  
 52 *Süttüg köldeng sugat tart*  
 53 *sügre tagda ñemziglig*  
 44 It has hidden in the plains,  
 45 It has got stuck in four corners.  
 46 The wings of the bird do not sweat,  
 47 The ambling horse's feet do not freeze  
 48 They are running in the white sky  
 49 In the White Palace  
 50 If the man is influenced by heaven (*tegri*)  
 51 We turn him to its right side  
 52 Make them drink at the Milky Lake  
 53 Feed them at the Peaky Mountain!

The shaman catches the runaway soul by its “ear”:

54 *Ay biyde tegleč bolganda*  
 55 *ak kulagina ur-ber iydim*  
 56 *ak ayasta şıdırler*  
 57 *ak bulutta şıdır keler*  
 58 *ong ñanına burgalar ürkken jula*  
 59 *üüş bolzo kurug bolorsar*  
 60 *küskü belen kuttı kaptar*  
 61 *jorgo ayaangdan toş albas*  
 62 *kuş kanattang ter albas*  
 63 *ak ayaska şıdırler*  
 64 *Ülgen körö ak ayaska şıdırler*  
 65 *ak saray tolp barsa*  
 66 *er mangnayga tegri şalsa*

67 *tegleč bolp barsa*  
 68 *ong ñanına burgalarbıs*

54 When I was a servant of Ay Biy,  
 55 I grabbed its white ears.  
 56 They were running around in the white sky,  
 57 They are running around in the white clouds,  
 58 The runaway soul turns to the right,  
 59 If it is quick your hands will be empty.  
 60 The soul was caught with a mirror,  
 61 The antler's feet do not touch the snow,  
 62 The wings of the bird do not swear.  
 63 They were running around in the white sky,  
 64 When they see Ülgen, they circle in the sky.  
 65 If the White Palace is full,  
 66 If the warrior's forehead is down,  
 67 He will become a servant,  
 68 We turn then to the right side.

### *The Types of Souls*

The “soul” is called *kut* in Kumandy but if it runs away, it will become a *jula* or *ürkken jula* (Potapov 1991, 46–50). The word *ürkken* or *ürkügen* means “frightened,” and as we know from Siberian shamanism the soul can leave the body if it is frightened. In one of the texts there is an interesting description of chasing a runaway soul and then catching it by its “ear.” The Altaic peoples of Siberia, the Turks, Mongols and the Tungus make a clear distinction between various types of souls. Quite often the Turkic word *tın* (breath) is mistakenly translated as “soul,” although its semantic variant is “life.” The word for “soul” in Old Turkic is *kut*, but it also has other important meanings, “luck, happiness, charisma.”<sup>23</sup>

<sup>23</sup> The original meaning (breath) of *tın* was similar to the Hebrew notion of *nefesh* (Greek *πνεῦμα*, Latin *spiritus*), but since this concept took on new meanings in Christian tradition, it is not surprising that *tın* was not properly translated. The ancient Turkic notion of *kut* “soul” is closer to the Hebrew concept of *rua* (Greek *ψυχή*, Latin *anima*), see Somfai 2017.

The southern Siberian Turks (Tuva, Khakas and Altay-Telengit, etc.) did preserve the concept of the “free soul” but the second semantic meaning “luck” disappeared among them (Baskakov and Toshchakova 1947, 97). Southern Siberian Turks believe that illness is caused not by the demons or evil spirits possessing the sick person’s body, but by something stealing or frightening the free soul from the body. So shamans conduct a ritual to try to restore the harmony of the soul and body. During these rituals they do not chase the demons away or cleanse illnesses. They concentrate on protecting or returning souls to the bodies of sick people. The word *kut* itself was replaced by other synonyms because the word has become a sort of taboo among southern Siberian Turkic peoples (Verbitskii 1893, 97–9 and Kenin-Lopsan 1997, 48).

Altay-Telengit	<i>jula/sus, üziüt</i>	<i>sür, süne</i>
Tuva (Tıwa)		<i>sünezin</i>
Khakas (Tadar)	<i>üziüt</i>	<i>sürün, süne</i>

In the first column we find *jula*, *sus* and *üziüt*. These Turkic words are used specially for when the soul leaves the body during illness and death (Potapov 1991, 155–6). In the second column we find words that originate from Mongolic *sünesün* and *sür* (soul; spirit). The Sakha (Yakut) of northeastern Siberia also use *sür* as a synonym for *kut*.<sup>24</sup>

According to data from Turkic peoples we can see that a person whose *kut* is dwelling in the body is healthy and lucky. The *kut* must be prevented from leaving the person’s body for that person to be happy. In Siberia usually shamans can help to bring back a runaway soul to a person’s body. The soul can run away for various reasons: (1) if someone is frightened; (2) if someone is ill; and (3) a dead person can steal the souls of his or her own relatives.

### *In the Footsteps of Vilmos Diószegi*

From 1995 István Sántha and myself, two students of the Department of Inner Asian Studies, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, started to conduct field trips to southern Siberia. István Sántha visited the Western Buryat (Ekhi-iret-Bulgat) several times (1990–2000) and the Tofa of Nizhneudinsk (1997).

<sup>24</sup> For *kut-sür*, see Seroshevskii 1896, 643.

I visited the Altai-kizhi and Telengit groups (1995, 2001), the Tuva (1995, 1998, 2005), the Sagay and Khaas (Kachin) groups of Khakasia (1998) and the Kumandy (2002). I also did some research among the Tofa of Khövsögöl and the Tuva of Bayan-Ölegey and Khovdo (1996, 1997, 2000, 2007, 2008). During these trips we collected a lot of additional information about south Siberian shamanism and about Diószegi’s research as well; we visited many places, and met many people that were involved in his trips between 1957 and 1964.

In the autumn of 1995 I managed to meet Satlaev, a native Kumandy, who was Diószegi’s interpreter and assistant during his one-month trip to the Kumandy villages of the Northern Altay region in 1964. I met Satlaev in Gorno-Altaiisk. At that time he was a retired researcher of the Scientific Research Center of the Altay Republic. I asked him about the Kumandy field trip he made with Diószegi and about the materials that disappeared after Diószegi returned sick from his last trip to the Altay. He said that the KGB interfered because Diószegi visited the Telengit region near the Chinese border, but later when I had the chance to read Diószegi’s diary about his Kumandy research, it turned out not to be true. Apparently, Satlaev’s translation of the Kumandy texts was not accurate; Diószegi blamed him for that, which made Satlaev angry and he simply kept all the recorded material, the transcripts and collecting book. Diószegi had to return to Hungary without them. Later Satlaev gave the recordings to Russian researchers, but the material was not published. He showed me in his house the notebook and the transcript of some shamanic texts collected by him and Diószegi which he also sent him later in Budapest.

In 2002 during my fieldwork in the Altay Republic I paid a short visit to Turochakskii *rayon* along the Biia river. Most of the former Kumandy villages by the river were destroyed in the 1960s; only Shunarak survived those times. Most of the Kumandy population moved to towns like Biisk and Gorno-Altaiisk and even villagers from Shunarak went through acculturation. Most people were Russian speakers and alcoholism was a major problem. I only found one old lady who could speak Kumandy and knew a few native songs.

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## Calypso and Other Ancient Greek "Shamans"\*

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*A number of attempts have been made to sum up data in ancient Greek sources under the label "shamanism." Erwin Rohde, Eric R. Dodds, Francis M. Cornford and others have discussed the topic, and Mircea Eliade duly refers to them. However, the final judgment is not clear as to whether or not we once had shamans in ancient Greece. Hungarian shamanologists pay much attention to the term rejt, rejtőzik (to hide, to be hiding), connected with the oldest vocabulary of shamanism among the Hungarians from a thousand years ago. This is the reason why I start with the well-known name of the Homeric nymph, Calypso (Καλυψώ), that means "the hiding, the hidden one."*

There are two diametrically different trends in the study of shamanism in general. One restricts the term to Siberia.<sup>1</sup> The other accepts everything connected with ecstasy, trance, and prophecy as shamanism. It is interesting to note that ancient Greece and Rome occupy different positions as regards the problem. Shamanism in ancient Rome is hardly ever dealt in scholarly studies. In contrast a number of attempts have been made to sum up data from ancient Greek sources under the label "shamanism." Erwin Rohde (2000), Francis M. Cornford (1912; 1952), Eric R. Dodds (1951) and others have scrutinized the topic, and Mircea Eliade in his summarizing work *Le Chamanisme* (1951; 1964) duly refers to them. The proponents of "new French Classical mythology" (for example, Jean-Pierre Vernant) paid less direct attention to shamanism, yet their works concentrating on the early strata of Greek religion can nevertheless easily be connected with shamanism studies. The Hungarian-American ethno-

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<sup>1</sup> See my views in Voigt 1978.